

KIPP Forward

February 18, 2025

To members of the Maryland House:

I am writing today to advocate for and support HB 688 introducing FAFSA completion as a requirement for high school graduation. For more than 15 years, the KIPP Forward program has worked closely with KIPP students, alumni, families, and school counselors across and beyond the state of Maryland to support FAFSA completion; we believe requiring it as a high school graduation requirement would support student matriculation and enrollment greatly.

I have worked in Maryland with college-enrolled students for ten years. In that time, our organization has supported hundreds of students who receive funding from the federal and state government, both requiring a completed FAFSA. Federal student aid supports students enrolling in college programs as well as career training programs; more completed FAFSAs allow for more options for students upon graduation. As a KIPP school, we collaborate with KIPP alumni-supporting teams in other states, and we know that the regions that require FAFSA submission for graduation consistently achieve the highest percentage of FAFSA completion.

We believe that altering the graduation requirements to include FAFSA submission will increase FAFSA completion; ultimately positioning students more options. We are grateful to Maryland legislators for their work and support of student futures.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brianna Callahan, MSW

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brianna Callahan', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lead Manager of Alumni Persistence
KIPP Baltimore